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Message Text

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDE-00 ACDA-12 EB-08
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0170
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 07073

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, SALT, UR, US
SUBJECT: EMBASSY VIEWS ON BREZHNEV VLADIVOSTOK SPEECH

REF: MOSCOW 06991

SUMMARY: BREZHNEV'S APRIL 7 SPEECH AT VLADIVOSTOK (ASSUME DEPARTMENT HAS TASS/FBIS TEXT) IS CALCULATED TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE ON THE U.S. TO CONCLUDE A RAPID SALT II AGREEMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE SOVIET DEFINITION OF EQUAL SECURITY. MIXING IMPATIENCE OVER WHAT HE REGARDS AS U.S. DELAYS WITH FIRMNESS AND AVUNCULAR ADVICE TO THE PRESIDENT TO REALIZE HIS "RESPONSIBILITY" TO THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, BREZHNEV OFFERED NO INDICATION OF FURTHER SOVIET GIVE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES BUT ALSO DID NOT CLOSE ANY DOORS OR REDUCE HIS OPTIONS ON THE EVE OF THE VANCE VISIT. IN REPEATING MOSCOW'S POSITIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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ON THE NEUTRON WEAPON AND REITERATING SOVIET REFUSAL TO CONSIDER LINKAGE IN ANY NEGOTIATING FORUM OF THIS WITH OTHER WEAPONS BREZHNEV WAS PROBABLY ATTEMPTING TO INFLU-ENCE THE DEBATE IN NATO ON THE FUTURE OF THE RB/ER WEAPON. END SUMMARY.

1. PERHAPS THE MOST SALIENT FEATURE OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH

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(SUMMARIZED REFTEL) IS HIS INSISTENCE THAT AFTER THE FORD AND THE CARTER ADMINISTRATIONS HAD SOUGHT TO BACK AWAY FROM THE VLADIVOSTOK ACCORDS, THE SOVIETS SUCCEEDED IN GETTING THE NEGOTIATIONS BACK ON TRACK, ONLY TO BE NOW CONFRONTED BY "INDECISION" AND "INCONSISTENCY" WHICH PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THE OPPONENTS OF SALT. SPECIFICALLY, BREZHNEV COMPLAINS ABOUT U.S. EFFORTS "TO AMMEND" OR "TO CALL INTO QUESTION" UNDERSTANDINGS ALREADY REACHED. IN THIS RESPECT WE FIND STRIKING HIS COMPLAINT THAT THE U.S. CONTINUES TO TRY TO "ERODE" THE UNDERSTANDINGS ALREADY REACHED "ON LIMITATIONS ON CRUISE MISSILES" AND "TO IMPOSE UNJUSTIFIED LIMITATIONS ON SOVIET MISSILES" WHILE GIVING THE U.S. FULL REIN TO MODERNIZE AND TO CREATE "NEW TYPES OF PRACTICALLY ALL COMPONENTS OF STRATEGIC ARMS." IN THESE FORMULATIONS, IT APPEARS TO US, BREZHNEV HAS IDENTIFIED TWO MAJOR OUTSTANDING ISSUES AT SALT AND HAS REJECTED U.S. NEGOTIATING POSITIONS, WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME PUTTING RIGID SOVIET POSITIONS ON THE PUBLIC RECORD. PRE-DICTABLY, IN THIS SITUATION, BREZHNEV LEFT OUT BACKFIRE, BUT MORE INTERESTINGLY, HE FAILED IN THIS IMPORTANT PRONOUNCEMENT ON SALT TO MENTION NON-CIRCUMVENTION/ NON-TRANSFER WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN A CENTRAL POINT IN THE SOVIET'S CRITICISM OF THE U.S. POSITION.

2. BREZHNEV DISPLAYS CONSIDERABLE IMPATIENCE AT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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U.S. FOR "DELAYS" IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT AS HAS SOVIET COMMENTARY SINCE THE PRAVDA EDITORIAL ARTICLE OF FEBRUARY 11. IN THIS REGARD HIS COMMENTS ARE ALONG THE SAME LINES WE HAVE HEARD PRIVATELY FROM SEMENOV IN GENEVA AND VERY MUCH OF A PIECE WITH THE ARTICLE WRITTEN BY ARBATOV ON MARCH 28 (MOSCOW 05955). INDEED THE BASIC ARGUMENTATION OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH FOLLOWS ARBATOV'S ARTICLE RATHER CLOSELY. THE POINT OF DEPARTURE COMES ONLY WHEN THE TWO DISCUSS THE SITUA-TION RESULTING FROM NO AGREEMENT. FOR ARBATOV THIS WOULD USHER IN A PERIOD OF GLOOM AND DOOM IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. BREZHNEV, IN CONTRAST, LIMITS HIMSELF TO AN EXPRESSION OF REGRET THAT THIS WOULD MEAN A FAILURE TO GRASP THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ADDITIONAL ARMS CONTROL.

3. A COMPARISON OF THIS SPEECH WITH THAT GIVEN BY BREZHNEV TO THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS ON MARCH 21 OF LAST YEAR, WHICH WAS ALSO DELIVERED ON THE EVE OF THE ARRIVAL OF SECRETARY VANCE TO MOSCOW, SHOWS SOME INTERESTING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES.
-- THE TUC SPEECH WAS EQUALLY HARD-HITTING BUT OVERALL

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SEEMS MORE SOMBER AND PESSIMISTIC THAN THE VLADIVOSTOK
SPEECH. IT FOCUSED MORE ON THE OVERALL STATE OF RELA-
TIONS, INCLUDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, WITH SALT
AS ONLY ONE ELEMENT. THE VLADIVOSTOK SPEECH ADDRESSES
ONLY SALT AND THE NEUTRON WEAPON;
-- BOTH SPEECHES CRITICIZE U.S.-CAUSED "STAGNATION"
(TUC) AND "DELAY" (VLADIVOSTOK), PORTRAY THE SOVIETS
AS REASONABLE AND FLEXIBLE, AND ASSERT THE SOVIET
BELIEF THAT A SALT AGREEMENT IS STILL POSSIBLE - THUS
NOT CLOSING ANY DOORS IN ADVANCE OF THE SECRETARY'S
ARRIVAL;

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-- BOTH DESCRIBE THE VLADIVOSTOK ACCORDS AS THE BASIS
FOR A SALT AGREEMENT, INDICATING THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE
NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THEIR INSISTENCE THAT WHAT EVENTUALLY
COMES OUT OF SALT II MUST BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO VLADIVOSTOK
TO BE DEFENDED BY THEM AS BASICALLY SIMILAR TO THOSE
ACCORDS;

-- UNLIKE A YEAR AGO WHEN BRZHNEV WAS DECRYING THE
DEPARTURE FROM THE 1974 ACCORDS, THIS YEAR HE CLAIMS
THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE RETURNED TO THE VLADIVOSTOK
TRACK.
4. BREZHNEV'S WORDS ON THE NEUTRON WEAPON STRONGLY

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REITERATED SOVIET CLAIMS THAT IT IS AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON
WHICH MUST BE JOINTLY RENOUNCED BY THE U.S. AND THE USSR.
IN DISCUSSING THIS WEAPON BREZHNEV CLEARLY HOPED TO
INFLUENCE NATO DEBATES AND TO WARN THAT THERE CAN BE NO
HOPE OF A TRADEOFF IN ANY NEGOTIATING FORUM FOR THE
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BANNING OF THE RB/ER WEAPON.
5. A FINAL, BUT NOT INSIGNIFICANT POINT, IS THE
INTERESTING ATTEMPT TO PARALLEL THE PRESIDENT'S
WAKE FOREST SPEECH WHEN THE PRESIDENT DELIVERED HIS SPEECH
AND THEN ATTENDED MANEUVERS ABOARD AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER.
BREZHNEV VIEWED NAVAL MANEUVERS ABOARD A SOVIET CRUISER
AND THEN DELIVERED HIS SPEECH ABOARD THE SAME VESSEL.
TOON

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